SERVE Final Reflection

During my internship, I learned more than I imagined about communication, fundraising and the inner workings of a non-profit. My internship came at the most exciting time possible for the Washington Global Health Alliance, as I was there for the final months of planning and execution for a two month long exhibit and activity tent, as well as the planning and executing of three global health events that ranged in audience from 800-2600 people. Some of my favorite parts included working with such a dynamic and great staff who are excited about their work and want to find ways to get others excited about it as well. I also greatly enjoyed having networking access to multiple organizations who were involved with the planning process, and who I would be thrilled to work for in the future. What I liked least about my time here was that everything moved so quickly and required a great deal of coordination between various people and organizations, and since I was not in the office full time, it occasionally felt confusing to catch up on different projects. I enjoyed that I was entrusted with various tasks that required high levels of communication with others, but often had to catch up from the days I was not in.

During the past few months, I feel I contributed as an additional worker who could take on projects and assignments and see them through to completion during a very busy time for the staff. I was able to manage the registration for one of the events, as well as help with a fair amount of social media marketing and outreach for several of the events and exhibits. I was able to use my contacts knowledge of universities to reach out to young people involved with global health and social issues. I benefited greatly from interacting in a professional situation with employees from other organizations and was able to overall increase my familiarity with
global health organizations in Seattle. In particular, I am much more familiar with some of the research institutes, whom I would likely not have pursued previously since I am not a scientist. However, even research organizations have community relations and communications opportunities. I also was able to receive a variety of increased skills, such as photoshop, website editing and maintenance, further experience with Excel, and overall basic knowledge of how acquiring sponsors and donations works. In addition I received a great deal of exposure to large event management and planning. I feel confident that these are skills I can market for myself in the future as I look for other jobs. I also feel more comfortable understanding how a professional office operates and what the expected interactions and communications between staff, volunteers and partner organizations are.

During this time, I know I also learned more about myself and what skills I need to continue to develop. While I was given several opportunities to network and make connections, I was not always forward and confident enough to seek out individuals and create contacts at with these people. I have made several valuable contacts, which has been one of the strongest takeaways, but I could have made even more. I also learned a great deal about how I operate within a group of professionals. We often held team meetings and brainstormed ideas and solutions, and I rarely spoke up with suggestions, due to lack of confidence among my professional colleagues. I was much more ready to do what I was asked to do than to openly contribute new ideas. In order to move forward, I will need to gain confidence and allow myself to creatively problem solve and brainstorm, and then voice those ideas.

What is now clear about my vocation is that I am definitely still searching. However, I now know that part of my vocational calling is to be in a place where I am helping others strive
to be better. Part of my interest in global health and global development is my desire to help
the poor around the world, but I want to also help the rich to see openly what other people are
going through in the world just because of where they were born. I think there are several
healthy and important ways for people in developed countries to engage with poverty and
struggle without only having to feel guilty or helpless.

I also feel I have been gifted and called to handle things with organization and efficient
management. This was shown to be true during my internship and was particularly well
matched with the needs of WGHA, as they operate from donations and sponsors’ money and
seek to educate the general public in regards to global health, two things that must be carried
out with careful organization and efficiency in order to effectively manage resources and to
further the goal of WGHA and the global health organizations it represents.

Since I am not fully clear on what my calling is, I know that much is subject to change in
the ways that it is carried out in my career. However, I think my calling to efficiently manage
and organize a project can easily be carried out in my career. I would love to work for a faith-
based non-profit in the future, where the gifts I have been given in my calling will help money
and resources to be better managed and therefore more work may be done to aid God’s people
around the world. In addition, I feel I am called to help create a vibrant and dynamic workplace
environment, such as what I experienced at WGHA. In the future, my career will be an avenue
for my calling to invest in relationships with others, not to be solely focused on work, but to
seek others out and be a support to those I work with.